Development (1948) Department

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[Despatch Abstract.]

GOVERNMENT Servants Conduct Rules- Talk on "Aboriginal Tribes and Cooperation" by the Deputy Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Guddapah and by the Dy. Registrar Tiruchirapalli- Text of talk- Approved.

ABORGINAL TRIBES AND COOPERATION:

The following are the most important aborginal and hill tribes scattered over this province viz. the Konds and Soras of Vizagapatam agency, the Koyas of East Godavari agency, the Chenchus of the Nellamalai's (Kurnool District), the Yandis of Sriharikottah Nellore District the Kurambas and Thodas of Nilgiris, the Malayalis of hill tracts of North Arcot and Salem and the jungle tribes of Kollagal, North Coimbatore, Palghat and Wynad, the Mannadis of the Upper Palni and the Paliyans of the western ghats. These constitute the most primitive and backward sections of the population. The question of amelioration of the social and economic condition of these tribes has always been a pressing one with the Government. Several enquiries were held into the conditions prevailing in these tribal areas and ways and means of tackling the problem from more than one angle suggested. Of them the Cooperative method occupies a primary position. The chances of success of the suggestion for the better ment of the epeople have been limited by several powerful factors, characterising these areas. Firstly, thrift and forethought which are the assentials of a sound cooperative movement are not qualities normally associated with these primitive people. Secondly, thogh some of these regions are rich in soil and natural resources, yet they remain practically cut off from plains for want of communications. The want of reads and consequent lack of access have prevented the flow of civilisation with its conditions for progressive development. As a result the aboriginal tribes have been left in continued subjection to the vagaries of the local traders and the neighbouring plainsmen who are not slow in taking advantage of their ignorance. Thirdly, the lack of education on their part and their age-long seclusion from civilised society, have in the past seriously handicapped the success of cooperative endeavour among these people.

Not withstanding the above obstacles, the cooperative method has been tried, and successfully too, in some of the tribal areas. Among these areas, the agency tracts of Vizagapatam, East and West Godavari, the Nilgiris, the Kollihills of Salem district, the Nallamallais of Kurnool among the aborginal tribes is felt in these important directions. Firstly there is the need for the supply of essential household commodities in demand in tribal areas, but procurable only from the plains; Secondly the provision of cheap credit; and thirdly the marketting of the monor hill and forest produce collected by the hill men with a view to fetch them the most reasonable and competitive price. It has been found from experince that the cooperative method, if it should achieve the desired results should be simultaneously tried in all the three directions as they happen to be closely inter-related.

The supply of essential articles required by the tribesmen at cheap rates is easily the most important of all the above three mehtods. The exploitation of these people at present by the merchants of the plains who purchase the hill produce at ridiculously low prices and sell at unduly high prices the articles required by the tribes men such as salt oils, onions, matcch boxes, clothes etc., is too well known to need any mention. Besides high prices, the ignorant and unsuspecting hillmen suffer in the matter of purchases bty way of inferior stuff and false measures and weights. It is with a view to spare this economic exploitation that the organisation of Cooperative stores or sales depots of stores in proximity is advocated. This work has already engaged the attention of the Government and some real head way has already been made particularly in the Vizagapatam and Godavari agencies and Nilgris hills where stores and sale depots of stores were opened. The opeining of more provision stores wherever chances of their success exist in the tribal areas is under the active consideration of the Government.

Next in importance is the need for marketi of the several items of the forest produce in the collection of which the hill men are generally engaged. The way in which the hill men are rewarded for their produce at the hands of the trader of the plains is a matter for sad comment and the exploitation involved in this sector is almost unsurpassed in the history of human endeavour. The need for a suitable organisation for marketing of produce of the hillmen with a view to fetch them a reasonable price is both obvious and pressing. The need for good communications is more keenly felt in the matter of organisation of marketing societies for the hillmen than any other type of society. At least one such society has so far been organised and is being successfully run. Even with its modest volume of business, the Athmakur Chenchu Loan and sale society has been doing yeoman service to its members of the chenchu tribe.

Third, but no less in importance is the grating of loans and advances by the organisation of cooperativ credit societies. The hill men need provision of cheap credit to carry on their operations and to purchase their essentials during the off seasons. The one important obstacles in the way of the successful working of the credit societies is the generally undependable character of the tribesmen and their tendency purpose should invariably adopt the same methods as the private meoney lender does to secure its assets, except that unlike the private money lender, it is not the object of the Cooperative credit society to fleece among hillmen has made a comparatively much better head way than other types of Cooperative endeavour. Thus as on 31-12-47 there were above seventy societies for hillmen in Nilgiris district alone.

One important lesston emergin from the application of Cooperative effort for amelioration of the condition of the hillmen is that Cooperative enterprise in the sense of voluntary and joint effort by the pople for the promotion of their economic interests does not hold out many chances of sucess. Atleast for some time to come i.e., until there is a substantial imporvement in communication for the better, and there is sufficiently wide-spread education among the hillmen official control over the organisation and management of the Cooperative institutuions is necessary. It may, however, be slowly withdrawn by stages to the extent there is the growth of conciousness amoung the hillmen.

On the whole even amidst the several limitations the Cooperative method has made useful headway in tribal areas, the wnd wherever it has been sucessfully tried its importance can hardly be exaggerated.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.
Abstract.

GOVERNMENT servants Conduct Rules- T.lk on "Aboriginal Tribes and Cooperation " by the Deputy Registrary of Cooperative Societies, Cuddapah and by the Deputy Registrar, Thiruchirapalle- text of the talk- Approved.

Development Department.

G.O. Ms. No.3857 Dated 20-7-1948.
Read also:
Letter from the Registrar, Cooperative Societies, No. Rc. 43927/48-V2 dated 23-7-1948.

O R D E R:

His Excellency the Governor of Madras approves of the text of the talk on "Aboriginal tribes and Cooperation" to be broadcast in Telugu by the Deputy Registrary of Cooperative Societies, Cuddapah on 21-7-48 and in Tamil by the Deputy Registrar, Thiruchirapalle on 24-7-48 from the Madras and Thiruchirapalle stations respectively of the A.I.R.

(By Order of His Excellency the Governor)

Sd.
Secretary to Government.

To the Registrar, Cooperative Societies
To the Station Director, All India Radio, Madras.
To the Station Director, All India Radio, Thiruchirapalle.

True Copy

Superintendent,
Madras Record Office.